



The construction-in-progress this summer at the new Little Theatre.

Theatre Department Instructors and Students Create a New 'Little Theatre' at Hunter

There's a new theater in town. It's not on Broadway, but it is a much better, and better equipped theater, than most of New York's Off-Broadway houses.

This theater, however, is for the exclusive use of Hunter College—specifically, the students and faculty in the Department of Theater and Cinema—a dozen or so of whom helped build it. Hunter's new Little Theater is located in what used to be the old auditorium in the high school building, just off the courtyard on 68th Street, near Lexington.

The auditorium, with its great gothic windows and small proscenium stage, had fallen into disrepair in recent years and was little-utilized. Last year, part of its upper facade was torn away to make room for the above-the-street bridge meant to connect the present Hunter complex with the new buildings across the street, and the auditorium was closed down completely. But the interior space remained undamaged, and with a little cleaning out and new construction, it was thought that the auditorium could once again become a useful and attractive setting for intimate stage presentations.

That's what Ian Calderon and Dan Koetting thought, anyway. Both are instructors in the Theater and Cinema department and both are experienced stage technicians—Calderon in lighting design and Koetting in stage construction. They dreamed up the overall plans for the new theater; Calderon designed the exact configurations and had them drawn up through his own firm, Ian Calderon Associates, Inc. That was about a year ago.

This spring, construction finally began. Koetting took over with a crew of 15 theater students—and worked throughout the summer to finish the reconstruction by this fall. And, he reports, the first productions will be held in the Little Theater in October.

The space is completely transformed. First, the old seats were ripped out and the slanted flooring replaced with specially constructed platforms that give the theater a flat floor, 32 x 52 feet, that is level with—and incorporates—the old stage. A grid of the same size was installed on

the ceiling for light fixtures and curtains—which can be positioned in an almost infinite variety of ways. A light booth was put into the small space above the courtyard entrance to the theater. And, finally, the drapes covering the walls and defining the stage area were installed just a few weeks ago.

The auditorium will now hold audiences ranging in size from 64 to 100 people, depending on the size of the stage area needed. What is even more practical about the new construction is that everything—the platforms, grid, lights, seats and drapes can easily be packed up and moved somewhere else. To whatever space the Theatre department might occupy, for instance, in Hunter's new buildings—when they are completed.

This new Little Theater gives students of the Theatre and Cinema Department a real "home"—an arena in which to rehearse as well as perform. Previously these activities had been confined to two studios on the fourth floor and "borrowed" facilities both within and outside of the college. Calderon and Koetting emphasize the flexibility of the new theater: it can be used not only for live presentations, but for film and video work as well. The graduate Hunter Playwrights group will be able to mount its productions here; it will be used for all faculty-directed shows and those directed by advanced undergraduate students. Other departments and campus clubs can make arrangements to book the space.

Best of all, with both Calderon and Koetting volunteering their talents and manual labor to this project, and with the students also working as volunteers on construction throughout the summer, the entire remodeling job cost only a few thousand dollars—which is less than a fourth of the expense of having the work done by outside contractors. Funds came from the college itself, and from proceeds of various theatre department events.

The department's Special Projects Class will probably give the first performances in the new theater. Hunter faculty, staff and alumni—and the public—will, of course, be welcomed at most events.

Rosie S. Parris, Nursing, has published *The Nurse and the Religious Needs of the Patient*, *Masters Abstracts*, Sept., 1975, and an article entitled "A Nurse Views Education, Needs and Involvement in Society," appearing in the *Journal, NYSNA*, June, 1976.

Milton Polsky, Theatre & Cinema, conducted several workshops in *Creative Dramatics* during the summer, and served on the *Creative Dramatics Redefinition Committee for the American Theatre Association Convention*.

Anthony Scolnick, Athletic Director, served as a tennis consultant for "Lighthouse Day," benefiting the *NY Association for the Blind*, at the 1976 *US Open Tennis Championship at Forest Hills* in September.

Alex Szogyi, Chairman of Romance Languages, lectured on *Moliere and Chekov* at the *International Comparative Literature Association Meeting in August in Budapest, Hungary*.

Jerold M. Weiss, Economics, has recently published articles in *The Journal of Taxation*, *the Government Accountant's Journal*, and continues to co-author a monthly column, "CPA Tax Questions" in *Taxation for Accountants*.

Gloria Wollnaky, Educational Foundations, has been elected *Secretary-Treasurer of the Board of Directors of the Foundation for Exceptional Children*.

Zenaida Gutierrez-Yega, Romance Languages, recently read a paper in Spanish at the *Conference of Inter-American Women Writers at San Jose State University, California*, and published an article in *Revista Iberoamericana*. She is also the author of a new book, *Epistolario Alfonso Reyes*—Jose M. Chacon, published in Madrid.